



EXCELLENT TEAM: Khairuddin (centre) with the team of researchers (from right) Vanessa, Nazlina, Azham, Zainab and Mohd Ismail. Also seen on the far left is deputy vice chancellor (student affairs and alumni) Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman.

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) has always emphasised its commitment to the community, as reflected in its research efforts that aims to offer solutions to challenges within the state.

"We are concerned with problems in the community so we conduct researches and provide solutions for these problems.

"We turn research into application. We then develop ideas and commercialise them so that they can be widely used. There is no point to develop ideas for our own consumption and satisfaction," said vice chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid at a press conference yesterday.

He informed the press that a team of researchers from Unimas did the country proud when they won the "Best CEO Award" receiving US\$1,000 cash prize at Ecopreneur 2012, an international green business plan competition for young entrepreneurs held in Ulanbaatar, Mongolia recently.

The team, led by senior lecturer Dr Azham Zulkharnain, came up with a business plan for an eco-friendly water treatment service for sago processing mills. Other team members included advisor Associate Professor Dr Zainab Ngaini, Associate Professor Dr Nazlina Shaari, Nordiana Ahmad Nordin, Mohd Ismail Salim and Vanessa Lawai.

According to Khairuddin, with such international acknowledgement, they are ready to work together with the sago processing industry to reduce the amount of waste, which will be beneficial to the environment as well as the industry concerned.

"We may even extend the solution to other industries such as palm oil.

"The excellent achievement by Unimas at this international competition is a testimony to the struggles of the university for the past 20 years.

"It reflects efforts to reach the status of a research university by 2015," he said, adding that the latest achievement is very meaningful as the university celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

Meanwhile, Azham explained that the service could reduce contamination by 70 percent, as sago effluent from sago processing mills go direct into the rivers and subsequently the sea.

"This will not just solve the environmental problem but also benefit the mill operators in the long run.

"We were researching on how to solve a problem at the community level. I did not expect our solution to be given an international acknowledgement at Ecopreneur 2012," he said.

The Ecopreneur competition was designed to give collegiate entrepreneurs a real-world experience to fine tune their business plans so that they will be able to generate funding to successfully commercialise their products in the green business sector. Unimas competed with a total of 26 teams from 22 countries, which include Mongolia, Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Columbia, Taiwan, India, Indonesia, Argentina, United States of America, Bolivia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Turkey and more. source: [theborneopost](#)

*BORNEO POST
JUNE 26, 2012*